

Elections and Democratic Development in Ghana: A Critical Analysis

Felix Kumah-Abiwu, Ph.D.

Department of Pan-African Studies, Kent State University, PO Box 5190, Kent, Ohio, 44242, United States

E-mail: fkumahab@kent.edu

Samuel Kofi Darkwa, Ph.D.

School of Business, Arts, Sciences, & Technology, Community College of Beaver County

1 Campus Drive, Monaca, PA 15061

E-mail: samdarkgh@gmail.com

Abstract

This article examines Ghana's efforts in advancing its democratic consolidation since the country transitioned from authoritarian regime to a multiparty democracy in 1992. At the center of this democratic development is the country's conduct of successful multiparty elections, although these elections have often been characterized by irregularities. Given the upward trajectory of Ghana's democracy through repetitive elections, the article draws on the concept of repetitive multiparty elections/democratization to examine whether Ghana's efforts at democratic progress through repetitive elections, although deficient in some respects, have helped to advance the country's democratic development or not. The significance of the article rests on the argument that the conceptual idea of repetitive multiparty elections, even when flawed, provides utility in the attempt to better understand the role of elections and democratic advancement in Ghana.

Keywords: Ghana, Repetitive Multiparty Elections, Democratization, Democratic Development

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1. Introduction

The wave of democratization or democratic reforms that swept across the world about three decades ago after the Cold War ended and the subsequent transformation of the political landscape of developing countries where authoritarian regimes succumbed to multiparty elections/political reforms (Huntington, 1992) have essentially not escaped countries in Africa (Frempong and Asare, 2017). The rapid expansion of liberal democratic norms with capitalist ideas toward neoliberal development option (Fukuyama, 1992) were part of the changes that have accompanied the post-Cold War international order (political and economic). As Bratton and Van de Walle (1994) have observed, the early years of the post-Cold War era (between 1990 and 1993) witnessed a significant number of military regimes that capitulated to domestic and global pressures for political and electoral reforms (Bratton and Van de Walle, 1994).

Ghana, like many countries in Africa, experienced similar political pressures for reforms (Bratton and Van de Walle, 1994; Kumah-Abiwu, 2011; Frempong and Asare, 2017). The country embarked on its democratic reforms in the early 1990s after the military regime of Jerry John Rawlings succumbed to intense domestic and international pressures for reforms (Bratton and Van de Walle, 1994; Kumah-Abiwu, 2011). While the transitional period of the 1990s marked a significant moment in Ghana's political/electoral history, Frempong and Asare (2017, p.1) argue that the country had what they have described as "a long rendezvous with elections which dates back to the 1950s, but its blushes with democratic governance had been unimpressive till the Fourth Republic." In other words, Frempong and Asare's (2017) reasoning, from a comparative standpoint, is that Ghana's Fourth Republic can be adjudged as impressive. It is not surprising though that these scholars made that observation. Indeed, the successful multiparty elections that have been conducted in Ghana for more than 25 years support the impressive argument.

In fact, the impressive idea or argument appears to align with Bratton's (1998) description of Africa's political reforms of the 1990s as significant. He describes elements of the significant idea from two perspectives. First, the multiparty elections held across Africa, including Ghana, in the early 1990s not only marked a significant breaking point from past trend of military (coup d'états) succession of power, but the "founding elections" of the 1990s introduced a transparent system of leadership succession where authoritarian regimes were peacefully removed from office through competitive multiparty elections (Bratton, 1998). Second, the political reforms with emphasis on multiparty elections across Africa, including Ghana, generated huge support and enthusiasm from the citizenry with high voter turnout at elections as the outcome. Gyekey-Jandoh (2017, p.13) echoes Bratton's (1998) point by stating that many African people developed a popular consensus that "military rule should be a thing of the past."

Clearly, the centrality of elections to the democratization process in Ghana, as the case in other parts of Africa, is a well-established argument in the existing literature. As Gyekey-Jandoh (2017) has recounted, an election does

not only represent a significant criterion of a democratic system, but multiparty elections tend to underscore two key elements of democracy. They include, participation and competition. While recognizing the value/importance of competitive elections in democracies, some scholars have raised critical questions on the conduct of multiparty elections, especially in transitional democracies (Omotola, 2010; Carothers, 2002; Bratton, 1998). For these observers, elections in themselves are not likely to guarantee democratic practices or development (Diamond, 2002; Schedler, 2002; Bratton, 1998). The central premise of the election criticism claim is that elections can coexist with systematic political abuses and other undemocratic practices such as human rights abuses and violation of other democratic practices (Gyekey-Jandoh, 2017; Diamond, 2002; Bratton, 1998). Similarly, as Schedler (2002) has argued, electoral authoritarianism can also exist where elections are used as authoritarian façades (Diamond, 2002) making dominant political parties win elections with high percentage of votes over a period of time (Diamond, 2002).

Perhaps, the frequent manipulation of election results amidst the growing acts of electoral violence (Danso and Lartey, 2012; Kumah-Abiwu, 2017) could explain the concerns about elections and democratization in transitional democracies. As Rapoport and Weinberg (2000) have argued, elections can be used to silence guns (military coups), but ballots or elections have also been provoking bullets (macro-level conflicts) in some African countries since the transitional period of the 1990s. In effect, one might ask whether multiparty elections are helping or hurting Africa's emerging democracies. This is where Lindberg's (2006a) book titled: *Democracy and Elections in Africa* becomes important in providing new insights in the attempt to better understand multiparty elections and democratization in Africa. While aware of the problems and challenges confronting the conduct of multiparty elections, especially during the transitional era of the 1990s, Lindberg's (2006a) work has revealed that multiparty elections serve beyond the conception of elections as *formalities of transitioning* from authoritarian regimes to democratic systems of government. For Lindberg (2006a), repetitive multiparty elections, even when flawed, serve as a mechanism for strengthening transitional democracies. This conceptual notion of election appears to depart from the pessimistic view of elections in Africa.

Although Ghana's record in conducting multiparty elections since the Fourth Republican Constitution was adopted in 1992 has been praised for the successes chalked within the past 25 years (Owusu-Mensah, 2015; Asante and Asare, 2017), we should also note that Ghana's electoral landscape has been characterized by electoral irregularities and acts of election-related violence (Danso and Lartey, 2012). The important question the article seeks to examine is: To what extent is Ghana's democratic development being shaped by repetitive multiparty elections in spite of some electoral defects or flaws? To examine this research puzzle, we employ Lindberg's (2006a) theoretical concept (*democraticness of elections*) for the analyses. The article is organized into three parts. The first part discusses the core elements of Lindberg's (2006a) theory or conceptual idea and its utility to the debates on elections and democratization in Africa. The second part integrates the literature on multiparty elections with the conceptual tenets of the theory in our analyses of Ghana's electoral landscape since 1992. This section further explores the successes of Ghana's elections with emphasis on key state actors that shape the conduct of elections. State actors such as the Electoral Commission (EC), civil society groups, and other state institutions are examined. The third or concluding part draws on the six conceptual elements of Lindberg's (2006b) concept with the literature to analyze whether Ghana's repetitive multiparty elections and the role of key state actors (e.g., the EC, civic society groups, judiciary and the media) engaged in the electoral process are helping or hurting the country's democratic advancement. The article's contribution to the literature is twofold. First, we re-categorized and systematically integrated the six conceptual tenets of Lindberg's (2006b) theory with the literature to examine whether Ghana's efforts at democratic development through repetitive elections, although deficient in some respects, have helped to advance the country's democracy or not. Second, we expanded on Lindberg's (2006b) theoretical ideas by introducing the role of election monitoring agencies (domestic, continental and global) in Ghana's elections and democratic advancement. We conclude by underscoring the argument that the conceptual idea of repetitive elections, even when flawed, as Lindberg (2006a; 2006b) has articulated in his works, provides utility in our attempt to better understand how Ghana's repetitive multiparty elections have positively shaped the country's democratic consolidation since 1992.

2. Repetitive Elections and Democratization: A Conceptual Overview

For more than a quarter of a century, many countries in Africa have undergone political reforms with different outcomes. From the 1991 historic multiparty elections held in countries such as Benin, Malawi and Zambia, to the 1992 elections/transition to constitutional democracy in Ghana (Gyekey-Jandoh, 2017) clearly marked significant moments on the political horizon of the continent. While the conduct of elections continues to improve with more than thirty countries holding first and second electoral cycles by the early 2000s (Lindberg, 2006a), some challenges still exist regarding the conduct of free and fair elections. Notwithstanding these challenges, the centrality of elections to the fundamental operations of the democratic project in Africa, like other parts of the developing world, cannot be overlooked. In essence, an election, even when flawed, is a "necessary evil" in most cases. In other words, as the popular African saying goes...*we do not throw away a baby with the bathwater*. To

put it differently, elections do matter in helping Africa's democratization process even when flawed.

Lindberg's (2006a) central argument in his work on democracy and elections in Africa not only challenges the pessimistic view on elections and democratic development, but also underscores the importance of repetitive multiparty elections even when flawed. To this end, as Lindberg (2006a) contends, repetitive multiparty elections, even when flawed, are most likely to serve as a causal mechanism for democratization. He describes this conceptual notion as the "democraticness" of elections. Drawing on Rustow's (1970) idea of how democratic behavior produces democratic values and not the vice versa (cited in Lindberg, 2006b), Lindberg (2006b, p. 139) argues that "repeated elections—regardless of their relative freeness or fairness—appear to have a positive impact on human freedom and democratic values."

A critical analysis of Lindberg's conceptual reasoning suggests two points or assumptions worth noting at this moment. First, the point that democratic advancement can positively be shaped by repetitive multiparty elections with the electoral system serving as a self-reinforcing mechanism for democratic development is quite novel (Lindberg, 2006a). Second, the assumption that repetitive elections, even when flawed, has the capacity to create incentives for political actors to enhance their participation and democratic values is similarly useful. Advancing the tenets of the concept elsewhere, Lindberg (2006b) underscores the argument of how repetitive multiparty elections can advance democracy or what he describes as the power-of-elections hypothesis.

2.1 Elections and Democratic Development

To explore the question of how elections advance democracy in Africa, Lindberg (2006b, 146-148) identified six issue areas that connect repetitive elections to the improvement of civil liberties and/or democratic advancement in transitional societies. They include: *citizens become voters, democratic "lock in" mechanisms, self-fulfilling prophecies, civic organizations, new roles for state institutions, and the role of the media.*

2.1.1 Citizens Become Voters

Repetitive elections, according to the theory, can introduce to the political sphere certain features of democratic values and principles. Lindberg (2006b, p. 146) identified principles such as "equal citizenship, the right to universal and equal suffrage, the right to choose between candidates and parties, freedom of opinion and voice, and the right to form and lead associations." To him, the exposure of citizens to these principles and the likelihood of being targets for politicians for votes and the media for information elevate the citizen to become an active voter/player in the democratic process. He posits that citizens tend to gain awareness of their "own roles as equal members of the sovereign power, endowed with rights to participate in the political process and to choose between alternatives under legitimate procedures" (Lindberg, 2006b, p.146).

2.1.2 Democratic 'Lock In' Mechanisms

The idea of democratic "lock in" mechanisms is the second element of the theory. It underscores a link between repetitive elections and the opportunity that connection can provide to political actors (individuals/groups) to embrace democratic values and sound electoral practices. In this case, as the theory suggests, citizens who become voters will see themselves as advocates of democratic principles in terms of their participation in the electoral process. Similarly, citizens and their like-minded friends or families are also more likely to become "lock-in mechanisms" to advocate, influence, and champion their democratic beliefs within the society (Lindberg, 2006b).

2.1.3 Self-Fulfilling Prophecies

The idea of self-fulfilling prophecies as advanced by the concept could be described as an outcome of the gradual progression from the aforementioned elements of the theory. The self-fulfilling prophecies tend to occur when citizens who are now voters come to the realization that prominent elites (from military officers to political leaders) and majority of citizens would be willing to accept and play by the democratic/electoral rules (Lindberg, 2006b). The space that would be created due to what the theory describes as "democratic consensus" has the possibility to help citizens who might not uphold democratic principles to support these principles (Lindberg, 2006b). A similar mechanism applies to other political actors. For instance, Lindberg (2006b, p.147) notes that "when an autocratic regime holds elections—even if these are not free and fair—those elected unavoidably gain a certain interest in maintaining their respective electoral bases." This is where the electoral outcomes become essential to political parties. A governing party with a strong electoral support, for example, is less likely to infringe on the rights of voters and their civil liberties for fear of electoral defeat (Lindberg, 2006b).

2.1.4 Civic Organizations

Another element of the concept that provides a linkage between repetitive elections and democratic advancement is the role of civic organizations. Through election-related activities such as voter-education campaigns and election observation, Lindberg (2006b) suggests that civic organizations build social capital which intend helps them to advance their democratic ideas. These ideas are also most likely to spill to other core areas such as the electoral system, issues on political rights, and civil liberties. In other words, the active engagement of civic organizations in crucial areas of democratic advancement create the incentive for nurturing prodemocracy ideas (Lindberg, 2006b).

2.1.5 New Roles for State Institutions

The conceptual tenet on new roles for state institutions centers on the logic that repetitive elections bring new rules and regulations often based on democratic norms and principles or some resemblance of that in transitional societies. In effect, key institutions of state, especially those in law enforcement, as the theory argues, are more likely to become familiar with these new rules and regulations hence the less likelihood of them engaging in undemocratic tendencies. Law enforcement agencies such as the military, police or other security apparatus of the state are good examples (Lindberg, 2006b).

2.1.6 The Role of the Media

With pro-democratic ideas/culture taking root as citizens become voters, with democratic “lock in” mechanisms, where self-fulfilling prophecies are manifested with robust/independent civic organizations that are armed with democratic ethos, it could be argued that key institutions of state/law enforcement authorities would become advocates of civil liberties (Lindberg, 2006b). This is where the media plays important roles in the dissemination of these ideas. In this case, as the concept notes, the media becomes what could be described as “democratic megaphone” ready to promote democratic ideas and civil liberties and hold political actors accountable for their actions. The vigilance with the electoral process in ensuring free and fair elections is another critical role of the media (Lindberg, 2006b).

3. Repetitive Elections and Democratic Development in Ghana

Having discussed the key tenets of the theory in the preceding pages, our next task is to explore how these tenets apply to Ghana’s repetitive multiparty elections and the question on democratic advancement since 1992. As previously noted, the centrality of elections in any democratization process cannot be ignored. In essence, elections do matter to democratization, but the process can equally be problematic. As Carbone and Cassani (2016) have argued, multiparty elections might not always advance democratization, yet they still can. This is where Lindberg’s (2006b) conceptual idea of “democratization by elections” becomes essential as earlier examined.

We should also note, as Carbone and Cassani (2016, p. 35) have observed that scholars such as Levitsky and Way (2010) and Carothers (2002) differ from Lindberg’s argument on the causal element of elections and democratization. Matthijs Bogaards has also criticized Lindberg’s ideas on elections and democratic advancement in transitional societies. While acknowledging some usefulness of Lindberg’s theoretical logic with reference to what Bogaards describes as a positive message to the “demo-pessimism” of elections that was growing at the time, Bogaards (2013) has, however, critiqued the theory’s inability to explain other disappointing cases (e.g., Zimbabwe in the late 2000s) where the quality of elections deteriorated over time. Bogaards (2013) adds that the causal mechanism idea or argument is not only underdeveloped with theoretical inconsistency/inconclusiveness, but the theory’s failure to support the central thesis when it was applied to other developing regions in Latin America, Eastern Europe/Central Asia, and Middle East/North Africa is problematic. Not only are these criticisms valid, but they could also be described, as we suggest, as the aspect where Lindberg’s theory fails to explain cases of countries that are experiencing democratic decay in recent years. For example, the case of Mali where democracy seems to be on the decline despite its past repeated multiparty elections represents a good case in point. Notwithstanding these criticisms, we maintain that Lindberg’s (2006b) idea is still relevant as an evolving theory of multiparty elections and democratic advancement/development in developing societies (Darkwa, 2018).

Where does Ghana fit in the debate on repetitive multiparty elections/democratization? In other words, we seek to examine in the next section how the repetitive elections argument is playing out in Ghana since 1992. In doing so, we advance the six conceptual ideas of Lindberg (2006b) and added an external component to his idea for our analysis. From that perspective, we re-categorized and discussed the six tenets of the theory within the context of domestic (internal) and international (external) determinants in advancing our main thesis statement (*how repetitive elections, even when flawed, advance Ghana’s democratic development*). It is essential to underscore the point that our systematic integration of the six tenets of the theory with added international (external) component not only adds new insights and perspectives to the broader discourse, but we also contend that this article’s integration of the theory with the literature/analysis of Ghana’s multiparty elections brings a novel element in advancing Lindberg’s theoretical ideas. The next part of the article integrates these theoretical ideas with a discussion on Ghana’s multiparty elections and democratic successes.

Since the conduct of Ghana’s disputed elections of 1992 in which opposition parties led by the New Patriotic Party (NPP) boycotted the parliamentary elections citing electoral irregularities (Ayee, 1997; Bofo-Arthur, 2006; Gyimah-Boadi, 2009; Oquaye, 1998), the country’s subsequent elections have witnessed progressive improvements (Arthur, 2010; Daddieh, 2009; Gyekye-Jandoh, 2013; Ninsin, 2016) with the National Democratic Congress (NDC) and the New Patriotic Party (NPP) emerging as Ghana’s two main political parties (Ninsin, 2008). As the existing literature has revealed, the NDC won the 1992 and 1996 general elections, but lost power to the opposition NPP in the 2000 elections (Gyimah-Boadi, 2009; Kumah-Abiwu, 2017). A turnover electoral outcome occurred in 2008 when the NPP was defeated by the opposition NDC (Gyimah-Boadi, 2009; Whitfield, 2009). As Brechenmacher (2016) has noted, the incumbent president and the governing party in both 2000 and 2008 accepted

electoral defeat and peacefully handed power to the opposition. The turnover election that occurred in 2016 where the opposition NPP defeated the ruling NDC in the general elections is another evidence of Ghana's journey to democratic consolidation (Omotola, 2010; Kumah-Abiwu, 2017).

These successes have led to the growing stakeholder confidence and global admiration for Ghana's electoral system as shown in a report issued by the European Union Election Observation Mission to Ghana on December 9, 2016 on the general elections. As the report notes, Ghana's democracy since 1992, has passed what they describe as "benchmark for credible, inclusive and transparent elections" (EU EOM-Ghana, 2016). Several factors account for Ghana's efforts at deepening its democratic project since 1992.

At the apex of Ghana's democratic success is the repetitive conduct of multiparty elections that has not been punctuated by any major political disruptions that could threaten the survival of the democratic state since 1992. At the core of this electoral success, as students and thinkers of Ghana's politics would agree, is the engaged role and activities of Ghana's Electoral Commission (EC). Although the EC has faced some challenges, it is still widely known that the EC has emerged overtime as one of Ghana's strong institutions of state (Ayee, 1997; Debrah, 2011; Gyekye-Jandoh, 2013). Though debatable, scholars and political observers share the view that the constitutional provision that established the EC as an independent institution of state has helped insulated it from undue executive influence (Debrah, 2011; Gyekye-Jandoh, 2013; Frempong, 2012). For instance, the EC Chair and two deputies have the same terms and conditions of service as justices of the superior courts, meaning they cannot be arbitrarily removed from office until the age of retirement or in cases of gross misconduct or reasons of infirmity (Agyeman-Duah, 2005; Ayee, 1997; Omotola, 2013).

However, the recent removal of the EC Chairperson and two deputies in July 2018 based on a recommendation by an investigative committee that was constituted by the Chief Justice of the Supreme Court is raising some serious concerns among Ghanaians. While the three top EC officials were reported to have been sacked because of their incompetence and misbehavior (Abdul-Hamid, 2018), Gyampo's (2018) analysis of the decision to remove the three officials as "legally wise but politically unwise" is interesting and accurate. We concur that the decision is politically risky, especially in a situation where such a removal can be misunderstood and misinterpreted as political parties prepare toward the 2020 general elections. Notwithstanding, the EC, as a core institution of Ghana's democratic state, particularly the hardworking men and women at the regional and district levels, where the actual election-related works take place, are committed and doing their work without blemish. Aside the constitutional provision that guarantees the EC's autonomy, the EC has also earned itself credibility for administering several elections. For instance, the EC's display of responsiveness to stakeholder inputs and its address of political parties' concerns regarding the processes of elections led to major reforms (Daddieh, 2009; Gyekye-Jandoh, 2013). For example, the EC now holds presidential and parliamentary elections jointly to remedy the shortcomings of the 1992 elections, which led to a boycott of the parliamentary elections by opposition parties (Ayee, 1998; Gyimah-Boadi and Brobbey, 2012). Photo identity cards were also introduced to ensure transparency of the electoral process since 1992. Sealed and serialized transparent ballot boxes have replaced the opaque ballot boxes used in the initial stages (Ayee, 1998; Daddieh, 2009; Debrah, 2011).

Other reforms that have ensured the transparency of the electoral process and integrity of electoral outcomes are the collaborative manner in which presiding officers and agents of all political parties have the chance to observe voting at polling stations, counting of votes, and the declaration of results. The opportunity for agents of political parties to certify election results at local polling stations is another giant progress chalked by the EC (Ayee, 1997; Debrah, 2011; Frempong, 2012; Gyekye-Jandoh, 2013). Political parties also have the chance to "monitor" the packing, transportation, and distribution of serialized ballot papers nationwide (Aubyn, 2012; Daddieh, 2009; Gyekye-Jandoh, 2016; Ninsin, 2016). At the same time, it is essential to note that the mistrust among political parties toward the EC depending on the political party in opposition is nothing new to Ghana's political orbit. Some critics are of the view that the presidential power of appointing the EC chair and deputies, without any consultation with opposition parties, undermines their independence (Ayee, 1998; Drah, 1998; Oquaye, 1998) because of the possibility of executive manipulations. In fact, Drah (1998) and other scholars such as Larvie and Badu (1997) and Gadzekpo (1997) have raised other critical aspect of the debate/critique regarding the EC. For these scholars, it is pointless to talk about independence if the EC cannot correct electoral misconduct such as incumbency abuse or advantage by ensuring a level playing field in the political process.

On the contrary, other scholars share the view that the EC continues to be independent in the management of Ghana's elections since 1992. Gyimah-Boadi (2009), for example, argued that the professionalism and political impartiality of the EC made it possible for political actors to, in most cases, accept the electoral results in good faith. On their part, Aggrey-Darkoh and Asah-Asante (2017) have argued that Ghana has since 1992 conducted several successive and violent-free (at least on the national scale) elections to the admiration of the international community. To these scholars, Ghana has been able to chalk these electoral successes because of its institutionalized electoral management system (Aggrey-Darkoh and Asah-Asante, 2017). It might be difficult to examine the EC and the successful conduct of Ghana's elections since 1992 without talking about its image of transparency and neutrality. Debrah (2011) captures this assertion well by noting that a unique factor for the EC's

success was its efforts in making sure the electoral process is sound and transparent, especially on the rules of the game (Debrah, 2011, p. 25). The transparency of the EC has also been captured by the following quote:

The electoral commission has come to symbolise fair play, transparency, accountability, honesty, justice, independence, integrity, selflessness, openness, objectivity and strong leadership and is idolised by many institutions in Ghana and in Africa. (Adusei, 2009, quoted in Zounmenou 2009, p. 6)

It is worth stressing that the quality of electoral transparency through Ghana's recurrent elections involves other stakeholders that deserve mention at this point of our discussion. The Inter Party Advisory Committee (IPAC), which was established by the EC in 1994 to engage stakeholders like political parties in the electoral process has helped with the institutionalization of the EC (Debrah, 2011; Frempong, 2008, Jeffries, 1998). For others, the emergence of Ghana's elite consensus is another factor that has enhanced its democratic development (Ninsin, 2016). The opposition-government conflict and tension situations that have characterized the 1992 elections have been defused (Frempong, 2012; Oquaye, 1998) because of regular meetings of political parties under the auspices of IPAC. This has helped ironed out differences and promoted elite cooperation among Ghana's political actors at the national, regional, and district levels. Given the preceding discussion on Ghana's repeated elections and the positive impacts on the country's democratic progress, one is equally cognisant of the fact that the country's electoral voyage has not been all glowing experience. In other words, Ghana's elections since 1992 have been characterized by challenges. From the 1992 parliamentary boycott to election-related violence (Kumah-Abiwu, 2017; Danso and Lartey, 2012) to frequent allegations of voter fraud and irregularities, to the 2012 electoral disputes that ended at the country's Supreme Court, have revealed the inadequacies of the electoral system (Aggrey-Darkoh and Asah-Asante, 2017).

From a theoretical standpoint, it could be argued, as the preceding discussion has shown, that Ghana's repetitive elections and the management by the EC have not only been praised since 1992, but the country's elections have also been characterized by flaws. It is noticeable that Lindberg's (2006a) conceptual idea seems to be on display in Ghana in terms of how repetitive elections, even when flawed, could promote democratic behavior and civil liberties. We also share Rustow's (1970) idea, as advanced by Lindberg (2006a), that a democratic behavior is what produces democratic values and not the other way around as apparent in Ghana. We further argue, based on these conceptual ideas, that the repetitive nature of Ghana's multiparty elections since 1992 has created the space for ordinary Ghanaians, civil society groups, the media, and other core institutions of state to nurture the "new democratic behavior" under the Fourth Republican Constitution.

It is clear, as we argue, that Lindberg's (2006b) identified six issue areas seem to be on display in Ghana. For example, we see evidence, as the literature has underscored, that Ghanaians were not only enthusiastic about the country's democratic transition in the 1990s, but *citizens* (Ghanaians) *became voters* as consistent with the theory's assumption. As the theory suggests, the opportunity for citizens to become voters focuses on their readiness to exercise their universal and equal suffrage and the right to choose between candidates and parties. We further contend, as consistent with the theory, that Ghanaians became free and aware of their role as equal and voting members of the sovereign state with the right to participate in the political process as against their previous status under military rule. In fact, Gyekey-Jandoh (2017, p.13) has reminded us of Bratton's (1998) point that Ghanaians, are now convinced that "military rule should be a thing of the past." Another example that supports the above argument is a report issued by the Commonwealth Secretariat (Election Observer Group) on Ghana's past multiparty elections. Commenting on the 1992 election, for example, the report notes that although the process of Ghana's transition to multiparty democracy was marked by a number of contentious issues, most Ghanaians also felt excited about the demise of the "culture of silence" giving them a new chance to speak freely about their past experiences and future aspirations (Commonwealth Report, 2012).

We have also identified the development of a democratic culture as another element of the theory that emerges from our analysis of the Ghanaian case. Lindberg (2006b) describes it as *democratic "lock in" mechanisms*. This is where political actors (individuals/groups) not only embrace democratic values and good electoral practices, but their participation in the electoral process creates incentives for like-minded friends and/or families to be "locked-in" or become strong advocates of democratic beliefs and values. With democratic "lock in" mechanisms in place, the *self-fulfilling prophecies*, which constitute the third element of the theory emerges. In this case, as the theory further highlights, citizens and key elites of the society (from military officers to political leaders) are most likely to accept and play by the democratic and electoral rules. Applying these theoretical tenets (*citizens become voters, democratic "lock in" mechanisms and self-fulfilling prophecies*) show that Ghanaians and their core institutions of state have exhibited and continue to exhibit "democratic behavior" through repeated multiparty elections and the positive impacts of these elections in the production of democratic values as Rustow (1970) and Lindberg (2006a) have clearly articulated.

We also draw on the conceptual element of civic organizations of the theory to argue that a connection exists between Ghana's civic organizations, repetitive multiparty elections, and democratic advancement. As Lindberg (2006b) has suggested, through multiparty election-related activities such as voter-education campaigns and election observation, civic organizations tend to build *social capital* that help them to enhance democratic ideas

of transparency. The outcome of this acquired social capital is likely to be extended to core areas of the electoral system, issues on political rights and civil liberties. To put differently, the role of civic organizations in key areas of democratic promotion will help nurture pro-democratic values (Lindberg, 2006b). Applying these ideas to the discourse on repetitive multiparty elections, even when flawed, in advancing democratic development in Ghana appear to be consistent with the theory. For example, Ghana's Civil Society Organizations (CSOs) have played a critical role in the country's democratic trajectory since 1992. Prominent among them are the Institute of Economic Affairs (IEA-Ghana), Center for Democratic Development (CDD-Ghana), Institute for Democratic Governance (IDEG), Center for Policy Analysis (CEPA), and Third World Network (TWN). Since 2000, The IEA-Ghana has, for example, organized the Presidential Debate and Evening Encounter series where presidential candidates from different political parties with representation in parliament engage in debates on electoral and policy issues. Ordinary Ghanaians also have the chance to ask questions at these forums as well (Frempong 2008; Ninsin 2016). Through the Ghana Political Parties Program, the IEA-Ghana with the assistance from the Netherlands Institute for Multiparty Democracy (NIMD) has also helped built the capacity of political parties through workshops and seminars (Gyekye-Jandoh, 2016; Ninsin, 2016).

CDD-Ghana has also played a prominent role in Ghana's democracy through research and advocacy. It offers a wide range of capacity building programs for constitutional bodies, state agencies, the media and CSOs (Gyimah-Boadi, 2009; Quashigah, 2016). CDD-Ghana has also been organizing Town-Hall debates to offer platforms for legislative candidates during electoral seasons to meet the electorates with their policy ideas (Gyimah-Boadi, 2009; Frempong, 2012). It has also supported other CSOs and professional bodies in the establishment of the Coalition of Domestic Election Observation (CODEO) to undertake election observation before, during and after elections. The purpose is to ensure that the elections are conducted in a peaceful and transparent manner. CODEO actually started on a modest scale in 1996 and by 2012-2016, it had developed into one of the leading domestic and regional election observation groups. For some, as shared herein, CODEO is capable of observing Ghana's future elections without the involvement of foreign observers (Aubyn, 2012; Gyekye-Jandoh, 2016). We should also note that the credibility and excellent works by CODEO in election monitoring in Ghana have created the opportunity for the organization to observe recent local elections in Liberia, Malawi and Nigeria (Aubyn, 2012).

While some have critiqued many CSOs for their lack of experts in specific policy areas (Arthur, 2010; Frempong, 2012), we suggest, on the basis of the theory, that Ghana's CSOs have done well by building social capital in advancing the country's democracy. Not only are these groups performing the role of what some have described as "democracy police" (Geisler 1993; Gyekye-Jandoh, 2016), but we argue that the social capital gains of Ghana's CSOs have spilled over to other core areas of Ghana's electoral system, especially on issues of human/political rights and civil liberties. We further argue, based on the preceding conceptual analysis, that Ghana's civic society organizations have helped and continue to help spread pro-democratic ideas and values through their active involvement in repetitive election-related activities since 1992.

The theory also underscores *new roles for state institutions* and robust role of the *media* as important elements that tend to emerge through repetitive multiparty elections. Through repetitive elections, as stated earlier, new rules and regulations based on democratic values will emerge as state institutions in law enforcement, in particular, become familiar with the new rules and regulations and less likely to engage in undemocratic practices (Lindberg, 2006b). In the same way, the media becomes a strong advocate that advances and promotes democratic values because of their engagement with the repetitive electoral process. It is clear, as noticeable, that the Ghanaian media has played its pivotal role in the country's democratic experimentation through its watchdog roles and the venue for voter education and political mobilization. The platform the media creates for issue-based politics since 1992 deserves mention at this point as well.

The literature underscores two factors that account for the important role of Ghana's media in the country's democratisation. The establishment of the Ghana Media Commission in 1993 and the repeal of the Criminal and Seditious Libel laws in 2001 (Arthur, 2010; Fobih, 2016; Gadzekpo, 2008). For some, the establishment of the Ghana Media Commission has helped to insulate the media from unnecessary government interference allowing it to have its latitude and independence in performing its role as the fourth estate (Fobih, 2016). On the part of others, the repeal of the Criminal and Seditious Libel laws has empowered the media to perform its duty without fear of vilification. Empowered by these, the media (radio, television, print and the social media) has been holding public officials accountable for their actions and policy ideas/initiatives. For instance, in 2002, the NPP government abandoned its attempt to raise about \$1 billion credit facility from the International Finance Consortium, a company the media found to have credibility issues (Frempong, 2012; Gadzekpo, 2008). The media has also exposed electoral infractions such as attempts to influence the electorates in ways that contradict the rules of the game (Arthur, 2010; Fobih, 2016).

Furthermore, the media has become an important platform in voter mobilization. During voter registration/election periods, for instance, various media networks use their platforms to mobilize the electorates to come out in their numbers to vote. They have also used their platform to educate voters against acts of electoral violence (Arthur, 2010; Gyimah-Boadi, 2001). The media has also helped to make the electoral process transparent

by identifying and drawing the attention of security forces to issues of electoral irregularities (Arthur, 2010; Fobih, 2016). The involvement of the media in Parallel Vote-Tabulation (PVT) of election results at polling stations has become one of the critical roles of Ghana's media that has helped reduced tension and anxiety about vote rigging concerns (Gadzekpo, 2008; Gyimah-Boadi, 2001). From a theoretical standpoint, as Lindberg (2006b) has advanced, the media, especially during elections, not only act as transmitters of pro-democratic ideas, but they can also advance democratic qualities by pressuring politicians as they air political debates. We see evidence of this theoretical tenet with Ghana's repetitive multiparty elections in terms of the media's role and impact on democratic development.

It is imperative to add that the judiciary, a core institution of Ghana's democratic state, has positively shaped and continues to shape the country's democratic progress (Quashigah, 2016). As the arbiter of disputes, Ghana's judiciary has settled minor and high-profile electoral disputes both at the local, regional, and national levels. Prominent among them are Isaac Amoo vs the Electoral Commission (Frempong, 2012; Drah, 1998), NPP vs Ghana Broadcasting Corporation (Oquaye, 1998) and the historic Presidential Election Petition of 2012 (Frempong, 2015; Wood, 2016a). The court system has also been proactive in judicial professional training. For example, the judicial authorities launched an Election Manual in 2008 to equip judges with the requisite knowledge and tools needed to adjudicate election-related conflicts. A second and third edition of the Election Manual came out in 2012 and 2016 to address disputes that might arise on election-related issues (Wood, 2016b). It is clear, as the above discussion has revealed, that Lindberg's (2006b) six conceptual tenets provide useful theoretical lens for our analysis of how Ghana's repetitive elections, although defective, have helped to advance the country's democratic development. It is equally apparent that the six elements of the theory appear to have been shaped from the domestic standpoint. What is unclear, on the other hand, is the extent to which external factors interconnect with internal elements or determinants in promoting the repetitive multiparty elections/democratic advancement argument.

This article argues that global factors cannot be overlooked in the attempt to understand how repetitive elections, even when flawed, advance democratization in emerging democracies such as Ghana. This is where international election observer groups become part of our analysis. As earlier discussed, Ghana's repetitive elections, even when flawed with irregularities, have been acclaimed by the international community as one of the best managed in many parts of Africa. Indeed, the role of domestic election observer groups such as CODEO have been a critical part of the electoral successes as earlier discussed (Aubyn, 2012; Gyekye-Jandoh, 2016). In addition to the domestic election observer groups, international observer groups or missions have monitored Ghana's past elections. For example, we have observer groups from the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS), African Union, European Union, United Nations, Commonwealth Secretariat, National Democratic Institute and the Carter Center among others.

In his work titled: "International Election Monitoring: The African Experience," Anglin (1998) notes that the most striking developments of the democratization era of the 1990s have been the emergence of an international election monitoring industry. While the industry is a modern manifestation, Anglin (1998) posits that Africa in particular became the "ground zero" or the prominent place for global election monitoring before its spread to other parts of the developing world (Anglin, 1998). While some have criticized the work of a number of observer groups for various reasons, it is clear that the central objective of these groups in their election-related activities is twofold. First, to monitor and make sure elections are free, fair and transparent, and second, these groups, as Anglin (1998) argues, work within the context of broader global efforts to promote democratic ideas and norms. We draw on Anglin's (1998) reasoning to argue that the framework through which these international observer groups operate in Africa, for that matter Ghana, is shaped by their liberal democratic ethos. In this case, we argue that these external groups have supported transitional democratic governments that adhere to rule-based repeated multiparty elections, even when flawed with the hope that the democratic culture will develop over time.

While the importance of election monitoring groups has been documented in the democratization literature, what is novel in terms of new insights about Ghana's elections is our systematic integration of Lindberg's (2006b) ideas in the analysis of the role/importance of election monitoring groups (domestic, continental and global) in Ghana's elections and democratic development. This is an important insight or something new about Ghana's electoral orbit that needs to be highlighted at this point of the discussion. Also important to note is the unique aspect of Ghana's success story regarding its "democraticness" of elections through international support that comes to augment domestic electoral initiatives. In most cases, it provides the technical and financial assistance that domestic actors often lack (Aubyn, 2012; Gyekye-Jandoh, 2016; Gyimah-Boadi, 2009). This has helped in nurturing the country's institutions to support its fledgling democracy. It has equally helped in conferring legitimacy on state institutions and actors often involved in the electoral process. It is also worth pointing out that in all the six issue areas identified by Lindberg (2006b) as discussed above, domestic actors were actively in charged. This confirms Lindberg's central idea of how successive elections can improve domestic democratic qualities over time and space. To this end, this article is of the view that Ghana's democratic development through repetitive multiparty elections, despite the apparent defects or flaws, has been possible because of domestic and

global factors.

4. Conclusion

The successful conduct of several multiparty elections in Ghana since 1992 has elevated the country to the inner circle of emerging democratic societies in the Global South following the demise of the Cold War. At the center of this democratic progress, as observable in other countries, is the focus on competitive multiparty elections. In fact, Arditti (2017) echoes the aforementioned point in a recent piece titled: "Ghana's Durable Democracy: The Roots of Its Success". To Arditti (2017), democratic progress is often rooted in credible multiparty elections, but the ability not to overlook effective democratic governance, which lies in strong institutions and the political culture that support them, is a sure pathway to durable democracy, and Ghana appears to be on this path with its efforts at democratic development.

Ghana's democratic project since 1992 is without question enviable, but that is not to suggest that the country's electoral system has not been plagued with irregularities and systemic flaws in the management of elections. The exposure of some of these electoral flaws after the 2012 presidential election petition serves as a wakeup call for the country or what Bob-Milliar and Paller (2018) conceptualize as *democratic raptures* in their recent work. For these scholars, democratic raptures are not only important for democratization due to new space they provide for opposition party alignment, political mobilization or the opportunity for citizen participation outside of voting system, but they also awaken political actors to unknown flaws of a democratic system. For them, as this contribution echoes, the 2012 presidential election petition challenge has provided a good case of Ghana's recent democratic rupture (Bob-Milliar and Paller, 2018, p.9) in our electoral system. Bob-Milliar and Paller's (2018) work represents a useful starting point for serious theoretical and policy debates on how Ghana can remedy the latent flaws of its democratic system.

At the same time, as we have seen throughout this article, repetitive multiparty elections, even when flawed, can help advance democracies, especially in transitional societies (Lindberg 2006a) such as Ghana. This conceptual idea informed this article's rationale in the attempt to find out the extent to which Ghana's repetitive multiparty elections, even when flawed, have positively impacted its democratic progress. While scholars such as Bogaards (2013) and others might not be sure if Lindberg's theoretical ideas can stand the test of time in terms of "theory testing and applications," it is essential to note that theories, as we know, stand the test of time when they are "tested" or applied to study different phenomena within the context of empirical evidence (*field data*) and/or secondary data/sources. By systematically integrating Lindberg's conceptual ideas with relevant sources and examples from the literature, we conclude by advancing or better put, underscoring the argument that Ghana's repetitive multiparty elections, although somehow deficient has helped and still helping the country's democratic advancement/consolidation.

It is also important to note that the contributions of Ghanaians in the diaspora, especially those in advanced democracies toward the country's development agenda as Darkwa (2018) has discussed in his recent work on remittances and development is another indication of Ghana's hopeful future. It is clear that Ghana can continue with this current path while serving as a good example for other countries across Africa. As Lindberg (2006a) has rightly noted, if successive elections can improve domestic democratic qualities, then the case becomes even stronger to keep the electoral process going at any cost. In that case, elections will become the certain pathway to democracy. In effect, the article concludes that the conceptual idea of repetitive multiparty elections, even when flawed, provides utility in helping us to better understand the role of multiparty elections and democratic development in Ghana. Future research directions could explore the conceptual idea (repetitive multiparty elections) from a comparative perspective with cases such as Ghana, Nigeria and Kenya.

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First Author's Biography

Dr. Felix Kumah-Abiwu is an Assistant Professor of Pan-African Studies and Director of the Center for African Studies at Kent State University. He received his Ph.D. in Political Science from West Virginia University. He also studied at Ohio University and the Legon Centre for International Affairs & Diplomacy, University of Ghana. His research focuses on elections/democratization in Africa, African security/foreign policy analysis, Black males/public education (African diaspora), and global narcotics policy issues. He is the author of *The Dynamics of U.S. Narcotics Policy Change: Implications for the Global Narcotics Regime* (2012). Among his other published book chapters, he has contributed a chapter on the security challenges of drug trafficking in West Africa to a volume published by the UN University for Peace (UPEACE). His scholarly articles have also appeared in journals such as *Commonwealth & Comparative Politics*, *Journal of Economics and Sustainable Development*, *International Journal of Public Administration*, *Journal of Pan-African Studies*, *West Africa Review*, *Social Sciences*, *Urban Education*, *Journal of Men's Studies*, and *The Round Table: The Commonwealth Journal of International Affairs*.

Second Author's Biography

Dr. Samuel Kofi Darkwa is a lecturer at the School of Business, Arts, Sciences, & Technology at Community College of Beaver County. He received his MA and Ph.D. in Political Science from West Virginia University. He also has MA in Linguistics and Literature from University of Wisconsin, Madison as well as BA in Political Science from the University of Ghana, Legon. Samuel's research interest focuses on political communication, electoral politics and democratization, comparative foreign policy, international development, African diaspora and human rights in Africa. He has contributed a chapter to the volume: *Ghanaian Politics and Political Communication*, published by Rowman and Littlefield, London. Samuel's research project, "From Brain-Drain to Brain-Gain: The African-Diaspora Community and Development in Africa," has appeared in the *Journal of Pan African Studies*. He has also written book reviews published by the African Studies Quarterly.